

# CONTENTS

JUNE, 1925

	PAGE
POEMS.....	<i>Richard Kirk</i> 162
DANSE MACABRE (Translated by Francis Brett Young).....	<i>Edwin Cerio</i> 163
THE CONVERT.....	<i>Everett Boston</i> 168
THE SONG OF RUTH'S MOTHER-IN-LAW.....	<i>Leland Davis</i> 169
HOW I GAVE UP WRITING POETRY.....	<i>Frank Harris</i> 170
A LADY'S FERNERY.....	<i>Raymond Kresensky</i> 172
TOWARD TAHITI.....	<i>Louis Gilmore</i> 173
TOWARD NIRVANA.....	<i>Louis Gilmore</i> 173
THE TRAGEDY OF JAMES JOYCE.....	<i>Bernard Gilbert</i> 174
THREE POEMS.....	<i>Maud Uschold</i> 179
THE PEOPLE ON THE STREET.....	<i>Marie Luhrs</i> 180
THE CIRCUS.....	<i>Edward Sapir</i> 180
THE MOLE.....	<i>John Metcalfe</i> 181
THE LILACS.....	<i>William Faulkner</i> 185
THE POT OF BULLION.....	<i>John McClure</i> 188
POEMS OF PREPARATION.....	<i>Joseph Upper</i> 190
THE GROWTH OF TRAGEDY.....	<i>Joseph Shipley</i> 191
NEVER DREAM LOVE YOUR OWN.....	<i>James Feibleman</i> 194
REVIEWS:	
THOSE BARREN LEAVES.....	<i>Julius Weis Friend</i> 195
POETS OF AMERICA.....	<i>John McClure</i> 196
TROUBADOUR.....	<i>Vaughn Meisling</i> 198
MAMMONART.....	<i>J. W. F.</i> 199
WHAT OF IT?.....	<i>J. W. F.</i> 199
OBSERVATIONS.....	<i>Louis Gilmore</i> 200

# Poems

By RICHARD KIRK

## When I Was Rich

When I was rich I had no pride  
In silken garments crimson-dyed,  
Or walking-sticks of ebony;  
But now my rags are what you see  
I must be proud of poverty.

## The Broken Stem

O do not say the way is long!—  
The way they went, for many a one,  
Broke like a brittle lily-stem,  
Long, long before the day was done.

And that brave blossom that it bore,  
Seen like a vision in the skies,  
Faded from them suddenly,  
And left but darkness in their eyes.

## We Go to Supper

My donkey trots before my cart  
To where our suppers are;  
While I, the not inferior dunce,  
Complacently recall how once  
I hitched it to a star.



# Danse Macabre

By EDWIN CERIO

(Translated into English by Francis Brett Young)

THE first non-catholic cemetery at Capri, beneath the Castiglione, with its few tombs scattered among groups of cypresses and overgrown by roses gone wild and heavy tufts of flaming oleander—the first protestant cemetery, as they called it, assumed, under the guardianship of Don Biagio Maltese, a certain air of dissolute gaiety appropriate to the life of the foreign colony whose refuge it became in death. It lay up there, isolated and abandoned, in soil unconsecrated; but no mere lack of consecration could explain the frivolous aspect of the place. Now, since the Scandal, we knew that Don Biagio had a hand in that; for though it was simply as custodian of the cemetery that he drew his pay, he was also a humourist. And it was as a humourist that they pensioned him.

When Don Biagio was first appointed to his office he found that, for the purpose of housing protestants, the place was not so bad. Its occupants had before them all the magnificence of the Gulf of Naples; proud-plumed Vesuvius and Parthenope, the garner of all Hellenic tradition, soft-dreaming on the horizon; the Phlegræan fields, ablaze with Southern sunlight, and beyond them, islands of opal and sapphire shining like jewels against the gentle line of Campanian coast steeped in the mythical and historic memories of paganism. A portentous landscape, crystallized in shapes of unique beauty, as if obedient to some supernal rhythm of

perfection. Yet, if you gaze on it too long, a landscape that takes to itself a stereoscopic, an almost ghostly quality: for is it not, after all, the ghost of the pagan world? Even the dead—even the protestant dead—end by dreading this vision; and if those who were buried under the Castiglione did not end with fear they must surely have ended with boredom at the solitude, the immobility, the awful stability of everything that surrounded them.

Don Biagio had lived so intimately with the dead that he understood their psychology: he had been guardian of another cemetery from which he had been dismissed, nobody knew why, and now he found himself among all these foreigners, lying there far from their native lands, probably forgotten, and, most certainly abandoned...

That is how foreigners are. Where you bury them, there they stay. Among foreigners you never find that cult of mortality that keeps dead images alive by a continual confusion of transference from one place to another; from an ordinary tomb to a private niche, from a niche to an elaborate chapel. Exhumation, as it is practised in the most modest Italian cemetery, may be numbered among the fine arts, and the mortuary adjustments of our meanest village resemble a futurist poem, with a movement, a vivacity, (Marinetti would call it a necroscopic dynamism) which are inherent in our vital, artistic, creative, revolutionary, explosive



race. Foreigners, as I've already suggested, stay where they're put. And Don Biagio, who was accustomed to Italian methods, introduced a certain liveliness into the non-catholic cemetery.

They still call it the Camposanto Inglese, though, as a matter of fact, it was always international. In it were buried a mixture of protestants, artists, poets, drunkards and blackguards of every race. If, as rarely happened, a foreigner died in decent circumstances, his relatives had him embalmed and took his body home. Embalmmment, so called, consisted of the simple injection of carbolic acid into the jugular vein. This, at any rate, was the usual method. But after the death of Mr. Pensax, from delirium tremens, a new process, which the doctors jokingly called the Pensax method, was invented. In such cases the doctors did nothing, for the subjects had obligingly embalmed themselves before death by alcoholic saturation.

A point of importance: because, in those days, the Capri doctors, who were four in number, had formed themselves into an embalming syndicate, and the bodies of their patients were divided into four equal parts. Suppose embalmmment cost a thousand liras: that meant two hundred and fifty each for the doctors. A rigid professional etiquette controlled their relations with living and dead alike: up till the moment of death all patients were private property; afterwards they belonged to the syndicate as a whole.

But supposing, you may ask, the sick man grew worse or his doctor blundered, so that his relatives took fright and asked for a consultation?

"We're sorry..." said the other doctors; but as long as he lived they wouldn't touch him. As soon as he became comatose his attendant was compelled by delicacy to suggest one himself.

"I have colleagues," he would say. "The responsibility is too heavy. My conscientious scruples demand..."

And shortly afterwards the four doctors met over the patient's corpse for the purpose of consultation. And embalmmment. But this only happened in the case of prosperous foreigners; and since these were rare, you will realize that the thousand lira tariff, even in those days, was not excessive.

The others were buried in the English Cemetery. It was called thus because the English have always held a majority, a controlling interest, on the committee of management. It was they who appointed Don Biagio Maltese as Custodian. After the great scandal they tried to pass it off by saying that they didn't know he was a humourist. He looked so serious!

It was perfectly true. His appearance was gravity incarnate. They selected him because they wanted to introduce a note of order into Capri burials. After Mrs. Anderson's reforms Capri had been engulfed in a tidal wave of morality. Its victims found their way, one by one to the protestant cemetery. Most of them were English: evidences of the controlling interest. Even in death Don Biagio found them spleenful, dyspeptic, affected, formal, correct. No doubt they bored him; no doubt he sometimes found himself sighing: "Where are the dead of yesteryear?" Was it this change of type that disconcerted Don Biagio and in-



fected him with the curious aberrations of conduct which later made him famous?

Nobody knows. All we know is that in the days of his custodianship the shuffling movement began. Suppose a protestant clergyman's widow died? Don Biagio put her in the tomb of an Irish colonel. Afterwards, at the time of the inquiry, they found as many as three widows in the grave of an American who had spent the last ten years of his life in a crusade for the Re-establishment of Monogamy on Capri. Nobody ever knew—even after the inquiry—exactly how Don Biagio went to work. We know that he started on the burial register, exchanging the little glazed tablets which bore the numbers of the tombs, and passing from this to an odd exhumation here and there on his own account. To be brief: within the space of a few years he managed to change the name, age, sex, profession, political opinion and religious faith of the whole defunct foreign colony of Capri. And the best of it is that for years on end nobody ever tumbled to it. Nobody would ever have known to the end of time if it hadn't been for the case of Lord Pensax.

Lord Pensax, like many another distinguished foreigner, lived—and died—on Capri in *Delirium Tremens*. As long as he lived nobody knew him as Lord Pensax. He called himself Mr. Tennyson. It was only two days after his burial that his friends, rummaging in his papers, discovered that he was, in fact, the eldest son of the Earl of Mamble. They guessed, however, that he was out of favour, and did not even telegraph to his family, who had dis-

owned his society and would certainly have refused to own his remains. Nevertheless, they decided to have him embalmed and sent him home together with his bills.

Pensax had left a number of bills unpaid, and his creditors, between them, financed the undertaking. They appointed Mangano, the hotel-keeper, to accompany the corpse to London: for the Mambles were a noble family, and would certainly pay the bills, the costs of embalment and transportation, and something more for the trouble that Mangano had taken. The doctors decided that embalment was superfluous. Pensax, they said, was safe to keep for a month or two. The bill for whiskey alone amounted to nine hundred liras.

Mangano ordered a zinc shell and instructed Don Biagio to exhume the coffin.

Afterwards—after Mangano's return from London—they actually accused Don Biagio of having done it on purpose. They said that he'd done it out of spite, for political reasons, that he'd been bought over by the opponents of Mangano, who was mayor-elect, with the idea of discrediting him and running him in for the expenses of the journey. Until the day of his death Don Biagio maintained that it was nothing but a mistake. He admitted that he had exchanged Pensax's number on the register with that of Miss Julia Sisley Bayne, the American painter, who had died a week before Pensax of fatty infiltration of the heart. But he'd forgotten all about it. He put it down to his eyes, which, as he said, were getting weaker and weaker every



year. And, even if he hadn't forgotten, he certainly hadn't done it on purpose.

The important point is that when Lord Pensax's family, who had made difficulties from the first, opened the coffin, and found themselves face to face with Miss Julia Sisley Bayne, they simply refused to take delivery of that lady or admit her to the family vault. And the Mortuary Authorities of London, to whom Mangano appealed, backed their opinion. Miss Bayne did not return to Capri. Mangano left her at Charing Cross, registered, with a through ticket to Calais. He himself set off from Liverpool Street, and reached Capri via Flushing.

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When the scandal was exposed and the Committee of the Protestant Cemetery met to consider the case, the English members were, for the first time, in a minority. The leader of the opposition, M. Laroche, the French dramatist, announced the fact and said: "tiens, tiens!" with a wink at the treasurer, who was English. The treasurer, in the president's absence, said, speaking for himself and his absent colleagues, that such insinuations would not and should not be tolerated. It was absurd to foist the blame of an isolated incident on the Executive Committee, the majority of whom were respectable English subjects. If anyone were responsible, the responsibility should be placed. And in any case the Executive Committee and the Committee of General Management must dissociate themselves from the acts of their Custodian. As for Pensax, he was in his place ...

"In Miss Bayne's," Laroche interrupted.

And as for Miss Bayne, the treasurer continued, it was ludicrous even to consider the possibility of her return. Unless somebody had claimed her, Miss Bayne, in all probability, was still lying in the station at Calais. A perfectly respectable station, he might add.

Laroche, supported by the Belgians, the Americans and the Russians, demanded an inquiry, the verification of all the tombs, or, at any rate, the most recent—and the recognition of all coffins found out of place. The treasurer, speaking in the name of the Executive Committee, offered no objection.

The inquiry was sanctioned and begun. It was not prosecuted for long: for it was August, and the summer happened to be exceptionally hot. They began with the tomb of Sophie Anderson, and found in it the coffin of Marston, Lord Bexley. Next came the turn of Gherkin-head (he'd been buried under that nick-name because no one knew his real one). Gherkin-head was that yellow-haired Danish violinist who explored the tunnel in the Blue Grotto with his wife, and was arrested for exemplary reasons, to show foreigners that, even on Capri, we draw the line somewhere. But he, too, wasn't in his tomb. In place of him they found Lady Cunningham, who wrote that commentary on Emma's private letters to Hamilton.

They dug another half-dozen, and found that every one was out of place. In No. 52—the registered resting place of Blumenthal, the archaeologist—they discovered the fiancée of the poet John Rivers; and No. 37, the religious reformer, Mr. Mildes, had changed places



with No. 93, a sadist from Moscow, while the gravestone of Van Kruger, a South African millionaire, had been transported to the tomb of the Parnassien poet, de Fleury...

At last the Town Council put a stop to it. The Foreign Colony was beginning to make the island unpleasant.

Even the Executive Committee, who instituted and performed the inquiry, had had enough of it. They decided to dismiss Don Biagio. But that was easier said than done. Don Biagio had become old, he was almost deaf; cataracts had very nearly destroyed his sight; he had held the office of Custodian for the best part of a lifetime; his experience was monumental, and all Capri counted him a specialist at the job.

Some things he admitted, but not all. He admitted that, just to pass the time, as you might say, he had tampered with the burial register; that he had changed the numbers on most of the tombs, that he had even made a series of exhumations, for experimental reasons: to discover if it were true, as people said, that Capri air would preserve a corpse indefinitely. But afterwards he had put them all back where they belonged. He also swore—upon his eyesight—that they were all there, more or less. Nobody could reasonably expect him, an old man, who had sacrificed his whole life to the Protestant cemetery, and contracted rheumatism to boot, to remember all the lot of them.

What if three or four coffins *had* been found in one tomb? How could they throw the blame on him? There was no more room in the cemetery. Nobody gave it a thought. They took no

notice of it for months at a time. When he told them that there was no more room they simply said that it would come all right.

If it had 'come all wrong,' whose fault was that? They were all there...more or less. Miss Bayne? Well, she was the only one. That was the fault of the Cavaliere Mangano. Mangano had asked for a corpse to take to England with him, and he, Don Biagio had given him the best he had...Why not even this Miss Bayne who had been entrusted to his charge was lost. No doubt she had arrived by that time at Calais station and was likely to remain there. If any member of the Executive Committee wanted her, it was open to him to go and claim her. Cavaliere Mangano had kept the railway registration ticket.

So the Committee, being convinced that Don Biagio was merely a humourist, pardoned him. They even put him on a pension and kept him at his post, for they knew that he was the only man living who could find a way through the confusion he had created. And there he remained till the day of his death, a faithful, efficient and conscientious Custodian. If ever, as rarely happened, a visitor arrived at the Protestant cemetery with a wreath of flowers, Don Biagio could direct him without a moment's hesitation.

"Veronica Ladenski... the Polish ballet-dancer?" the visitor might ask.

"Yes, yes, I know," Don Biagio would answer. And then he would murmur to himself: "Red beard... Russian general... I know. The one that threw himself over the cliff. Here you are, Sir: over there on the right, under that oleander."

For by that time he had become deaf as well as blind.

When Don Biagio died the old Protestant Cemetery was no longer the mournful melancholy place it once had been. Grass grew lush among the tombs; rambling ivy had covered all the stones; the oleanders flamed in the sun, and the wide, central avenue, which had become Don Biagio's kitchen-garden, supplied a note of tender gaiety between the dark walls of cypress with the fresh green of Don Biagio's famous early lettuces. For, in the years that preceded his death, the Custodian of the Protestant Cemetery devoted himself to gardening and supplied the whole of the foreign colony with Spring vegetables.

That central avenue, with its neat

little beds, was all put under salads, and hedged on either side with the gaudy marrow flower, whose clinging tendrils bedecked the neighboring tombs with a drapery of richer green. All around them rioted a wealth of gay, exuberant bloom: great heads of purple stock, tall hollyhock stems, thickets of odorous vervain, masses of sweet basil, of rue, of mint, of tarragen and spikenard...

A note of tender gaiety, I have said, which blended, in strange harmony, with the spirits of these dead men and women who, for thirty years and more, under Don Biagio's auspices, had exchanged secrets, and smiled together over the mysteries of the Capri foreign colony: that colony of artists and of poets, of tipplers and good fellows.

## The Convert

By EVERETT BOSTON

The Lord is my Shepherd on the Meadows of the Sea:  
His Eye and His Arm are with me in the flying scud,  
Tho' the froth of wickedness rises to my lips, His gale will erase it,  
And my curses shall be lost in the waters, while my prayers shall rise to  
God.

I shall venture forth on the bosom of Death, serene in my Faith.  
The ropes and the masts are my doing,  
But if they fail my Faith shall endure,  
For in Life the Peace of God is on me, and in death His waters cleanse me.  
His power and glory are revealed to me;  
For I have dreaded Him in the vast waters, and worshipped Him in the  
stars.

Now I have dared my ignorance and made a song unto Him  
In the short leisure and simple words of the sea.



# The Song of Ruth's Mother-In-Law

By LELAND DAVIS

Remember Mahlon! How Mahlon pressed  
Your wee middle and small brown breast!  
And how, caressed, love-clapped and dandled,  
You'd let him fiddle away an hour,  
In the mid-harvest! Right many an hour!  
Then you were lovely and you had power!

*Burden:*

*Now Boaz. . . Ruth, he's a man of wax! . . .  
But the gleanings slacks. And, Ruth, I'm worried!  
I'm worried, I own, and my back's got weaker!  
Oh, a husband buried might well be stone  
To his lean widow left all alone!*

Your silver mirror will tell, O Ruth,  
Crow's-feet gather; and passion, sooth,  
Outlasts poor Youth by some few winters  
That Youth mayn't weather! . . . Yea, many an hour!  
Don't you remember? Right many an hour!  
Then you were lovely and you had power!

*Burden:*

*Now Boaz. . . Ruth, he's a man of wax! . . .  
But the gleanings slacks. And, Ruth, I'm worried!  
I'm worried, I own, and my back's got weaker!  
Oh, a husband buried might well be stone  
To his lean widow left all alone!*

# How I Gave up Writing Poetry

By FRANK HARRIS

In the early eighties I called upon Froude, the historian, at Salcombe in South Devon. His house was situated on a cliff overlooking the bay. I was ushered into a delightful room and gave the servant a letter which Carlyle had given me for Froude. In a few moments Froude came in with the letter in his hands; he was tall and slight, of scholarly appearance. "An extraordinary letter," he began. "You know what Carlyle says in it?"

"No, I don't," I replied. "I put it in my pocket when he gave it to me and when I took it out it had stuck and I never opened it. I knew it would be friendly and more than fair."

"It's very astonishing," Froude broke in. "Carlyle asks me to help you in your literary ambitions, says he 'expects more considerable things from Harris than from anyone I met since parting from Emerson.' I'd be very proud if he had said it about me. Take a seat, won't you, and tell me about your meetings with him. I have always thought him the best brain, the greatest man of our time." And the gray eyes searched me.

"He has been my hero," I said, "since I first read 'Latter Day Pamphlets' and 'Heroes and Hero Worship' as a cowboy in western America."

"A cowboy!" repeated Froude as if amazed.

"It was Carlyle's advice," I went on, "that sent me for four years to German

universities and I finished my schooling with a year in Athens."

"How interesting," said Froude, who evidently did not understand that adventures come to the adventurous. We talked for an hour or more but when he asked me to lunch, as a sort of afterthought, I told him I had arranged to drive back to the nearby town and lunch with a friend. Finally he assured me that he would return to London in a fortnight or so and soon after give a dinner and invite Chennery, the editor of "The Times," and other people of importance in literature to meet me. He would do his best to carry out Carlyle's wishes. I thanked him, of course, warmly while protesting that I didn't want to give him trouble. He then asked me had I written anything he could read. I pulled out a small book in which I had written in my best copper-plate hand a few dozen poems, chiefly sonnets, and gave it to him.

A little later we shook hands and I returned to my inn and next morning I set off for London. The English country pleased me hugely: it was so neat and well kept. But there was nothing grandiose about the scenery, nothing so fine as the Catskills, nothing to compare with the enthralling beauty of eastern France to say nothing of the Rockies!

The dinner came off in due course. Froude introduced me to Mr. Chennery and at table put me on his left. When the dinner was almost over he presented me to the score of guests by saying that Carlyle had sent him a letter ask-

(This article is from the forthcoming second volume of Frank Harris's Autobiography. The book is privately printed by the author for subscribers only as it is astonishingly daring in places.)



ing him to help me in my literary career and praising me in his high way. He (Froude) had read some of my poems and had assured himself that Carlyle's commendation was well deserved; he then read one of my sonnets to let his guests judge. "Mr. Harris," he added, "tells me that he has begun writing for 'The Spectator,' and most of us know that Mr. Hutton, the editor, is a good if severe critic."

To say I was pleased is nothing: almost everyone drank wine with me or wished me luck with that charming English bonhomie which costs so little and is so ingratiating.

As we rose to go to the drawing room for coffee I slipped into the hall to get my latest sonnet from my overcoat. I might be asked to read a poem and I wanted my best. How easily one is flattered to folly at seven and twenty!

When I reached the drawing room door I found it nearly closed and a tall man's shoulders almost against it. I did not wish to press rudely in and as I stood there I heard the big man ask his companion what he thought of the poetry.

"I don't know why you should ask me," replied his friend in a thin voice.

"Because you are a poet and must know," affirmed the tall man. "If you want my opinion," the weak voice broke in, "I can only say that the sonnet we heard was not bad; it showed good knowledge of verse form, very genuine feeling but no new singing quality, not a new cadence in it."

"No poet, then?" said the tall man.

"Not in my opinion," was the reply.

The next moment the pair moved away from the door and I entered. With

one glance I convinced myself that my stubborn critic was Austin Dobson who assuredly was a judge of the technique of poetry. But the condemnation did not need weighting with authority; it had reached my very heart because I felt it, knew it to be true. "No new singing quality, not a new cadence in it." No poet then; a trained imitator. I was hot and cold with self-contempt.

Suddenly Mr. Froude called me. "I want to introduce you," he said, "to our best publisher, Mr. Charles Longman, and I'm glad to be able to tell you that he has consented to bring out your poems immediately and I'll write a preface to them."

Of course, I understood that "good kind Froude," as Carlyle had called him, was acting out of pure goodness of heart; I knew, too, that a preface from his pen would shorten my way to fame by at least ten years. But I was too stricken, too cast down to accept such help.

"It's very, very kind of you, Mr. Froude," I exclaimed, "and I don't know how to thank you, and Mr. Longman, too, but I don't deserve the honor; my verses are not good enough."

"You must allow me to be the judge of that," said Froude, a little huffed I could see, by my unexpected refusal.

"Oh, please not," I cried, "my verses are not good enough. Really, I know. Please, please give them back to me." He lifted his eyebrows and handed me the booklet. I thanked him again, but how I left the room I have no idea. I wanted to be alone, away from all those kind, encouraging, false eyes, to be by myself alone. . . . I was ashamed to the soul by my extravagant self-estimate.

I took a cab home and sat down to

read the poems. Some of them were poor and at once I burned them. But after many readings, three or four still seemed to me good, and I resolved to keep them. But I could not sleep. At last, in a fever, I heard the milkman with his cans and I knew it was seven o'clock. I had lost a precious night's sleep. I flung myself out of bed and

burned the last four sonnets; then got into bed again and slept the sleep of the just till past noon....

I awoke to the full consciousness that I was not a poet. Never again would I even try to write poetry—never. Prose was all I could reach, so I must learn to write prose as well as I could and leave poetry for more gifted singers.

## A Lady's Fernery

By RAYMOND KRESENSKY

Here the air is heavy.  
There is the even drip  
Of fountain water.

A slender plume  
Blows over an earthen bowl.  
There is a ruffled hoop skirt  
And a miniature parasol  
From an old file  
Of Godey's Lady's Book.

In a corner  
Is a feathered boa,  
And a chiffon veil.  
There is a large umbrella  
For a day of showers.  
Some one has dropped  
A fringed Spanish shawl.

Ferns are laces,  
Laces are ferns.



# Toward Tahiti

By LOUIS GILMORE

Tomorrow  
I may visit the Valley of Kings

Too little Egyptologist today  
I seek instead  
New perfumes,  
Larger flowers  
*Des plaisirs . . .*  
In brief  
Tahiti

Tahiti  
It is rumored  
Was once Eden

Its pastimes prove more varied  
And Eve and Adam subtler  
Since the Snake

# Toward Nirvana

By LOUIS GILMORE

Assume  
Upon a lotus  
An hieratic posture  
Umbilical fixation may assist

Castrate each sense  
Purge memory  
Extirpate desire

Think nothing  
Whiten the thought

# The Tragedy of James Joyce

By BERNARD GILBERT

*GILBERT*: My dear Rosser: what's the matter?

*PAUL ROSSER*: ! ! ! ! !

..*GILBERT*: I daresay: but what?

*ROSSER*: One of my nieces, in Boston, asked me to take back a book that she couldn't get in the States, because it was somewhat progressive. Presently, I got a copy sent over from Paris.

*GILBERT*: What's the book?

*ROSSER*: "Ulysses."

*GILBERT*: I see! You've been reading it!

*ROSSER*: I read it from cover to cover and then ripped it up. Never, Gilbert, did I dream that such books could be written.

*GILBERT*: Hasn't Rabelais reached your States yet?

*ROSSER*: He's a classic; besides . . . he's dull. But this book isn't dull. Where it isn't crazy or blasphemous, it's just filthy. There aren't words! I'd sooner see my niece in her grave than reading that last section, where a woman says things ! ! !

*GILBERT*: Never mind! Doubtless your Customs will continue to protect your shores and your niece; though, mind you, Ulysses isn't crazy. It's lots of queer things; but if read with intelligent care, it's quite straightforward.

*ROSSER*: I managed to follow some of it after the practice I'd had with your Bly Market; but a lot of Ulysses is the meandering of a lunatic.

*GILBERT*: Joyce parodies many

styles, and in certain sections he carries out advanced experiments in literary presentation, which it would take too long to go into——

*ROSSER*: God forbid!

*GILBERT*: But his threads may be unravelled and his pattern followed. I read it three times——

*ROSSER*: ! ! !

*GILBERT*: You see, I, too, had done experiments in literary presentation and was interested from that angle. But it is a work of genius.

*ROSSER*: And I repeat that it's a farrago of crazy filth.

*GILBERT*: Which leaves us where we were. Let us then look at it for a moment.

*ROSSER*: No, thanks!

*GILBERT*: It is a masterpiece which will do a great mischief in our disrupted world. Your police—and ours—are right in trying to keep it away, although such efforts are useless. You can't suppress a genius, and Joyce is one of the greatest living disruptive artists in England—or America. He is an evil force. He will have an enormous influence on rising writers. He is a tragic figure.

*ROSSER*: Why tragic? I don't see that.

*GILBERT*: His two books: Portrait of the Artist, and Ulysses, disclose his tragedy. The tragedy of disruption.

*ROSSER*: Young Tyrell says you're cracked on disruptive art and uprooted communities.



GILBERT: Having grasped the key of our age, everything falls into place, accordingly.

ROSSER: Young Tyrell admires Ulysses enormously. We quarrelled.

GILBERT: That was a pity.

ROSSER: He thinks nobody appreciates Ulysses except you and he; and says you are wrong-headed about it. All the reviews, he believes, were silly.

GILBERT: How can a reviewer cope with a book like that? It would take an artist as great as Joyce to deal with it adequately, and that dealing would occupy a volume of the same size. It's unreasonable to expect anything of the sort. Our reviewers are neither better nor worse than their papers, and their public.

ROSSER: You're a bit like the fox who couldn't get the grapes. You made your mind up, at the start of Old England, that you wouldn't ever get any money out of the volumes, and so you stand aloof and pretend to be superior. I notice the *Times* Supplement thinks you small beer.

GILBERT: I don't mind that. It is always painstaking and thorough—as far as it goes—which is as far as its public wants and will allow. It does represent our best reading public.

ROSSER: That's how you get out of it, is it?

GILBERT: In England, my dear Rosser, the *serious* artist—the writer with something vital to put forth—can hope for no recognition under thirty years. Having grasped that essential fact, I don't worry over the opposition of the *Times*; or any other opposition,

ROSSER: All the same, I'm sorry . . . for my sake as well as yours. In the States the Supplement has more in-

fluence than all your other reviews put together.

GILBERT: I discussed that once with Clutton Brock when I was visiting him at Godalming. He wrote for the Supplement, you remember. He advised me to put forward my side of the case and leave it there.

ROSSER: Much good that will do!

GILBERT: I'm not trying to alter England. I accept it. We have no first-rate reviewing in our Press. The nature of the case forbids that.

ROSSER: In the States we look on your reviewers as Old Masters.

GILBERT: Our literary criticism is almost entirely done by log-rollers and sentimental noodles.

ROSSER: You've glided away from the beastliness of Joyce. I'm waiting to hear you defend that.

GILBERT: I don't. Joyce saw it in his native Dublin and set it forth. I'm only thankful I wasn't born in a city. My lot was cast in a rooted community whose people are frank about sex; but neither repressed, furtive, nor beastly. I was therefore able to set them forth without demur; and, although to keep my publishers free from the police I had to leave a few expressions blank, they are very few. Now the beastliness of Ulysses is the beastliness of the modern city.

ROSSER: Not our cities. They are clean.

GILBERT: I doubt that. Even so, it doesn't affect the way in which Joyce saw Dublin.

ROSSER: Then you do defend him!

GILBERT: I *accept* him exactly as I accept snakes, hornets, poisons, tigers, and Communists; as a part of the cosmos.

ROSSER: You destroy snakes and tigers. You keep poisons and hornets well in hand.

GILBERT: I would destroy the Communist and the Disruptive Artist.

ROSSER: Oh, would you! We shall see you over in the States! That talk would go down well, there.

GILBERT: Old England's enough for one lifetime, even if I didn't hate travelling. The measures your people take in weeding out disruptive elements seem admirable. The instinct is fundamentally sound, for a community that fails to defend itself from disruption is like a body that yields to cancer.

ROSSER: You know, Gilbert, I alternately agree and disagree with you, when you talk. Where *are* you?

GILBERT: Right here. Maybe you are in the air?

ROSSER: I'm just where you placed me, out in the States, ready to receive those long letters from Hugo Thorpe that you are drafting for your next volume—or is it the next but one. Let us confine ourselves to Ulysses.

GILBERT: Ulysses is Joyce. I enjoy his art just as I enjoy the work of other disruptive artists, like Dostoevsky, Anatole France, Richard Strauss or Thomas Hardy; just—let us say—as I enjoy the colouring of a tropical snake and the striped liveliness of a hornet. We kill the hornet, without malice—

ROSSER: If he hasn't stung us!

GILBERT:—as a danger to our being. That is my attitude to the disruptive artist.

ROSSER: But you can't kill Joyce, nor stop the spread of his work; so what's the tragedy you speak of? I hear he has made money from his Ulysses. He is world-famous . . . or infamous.

Thanks to the embargo, I am told that copies of Ulysses fetch two hundred dollars in the States; and no doubt he is as happy as any king.

GILBERT: He is unhappy as any king.

ROSSER: Do you know him, personally?

GILBERT: I spoke to him, once, in Paris; but I know nothing of him beyond that which lies open to all, in his work.

ROSSER: Then I don't understand you.

GILBERT: I wish you had read Janko Lavrin's critical books, where he deals with the four great writers of the 19th century: Tolstoy, Ibsen, Nietzsche, and Dostoevsky. None of those could accept the world they lived in. They had no fixed values, and, having broken their roots, were lost in the Void. Lavrin calls them God-Strugglers, which is a good term. They were searching in agony for some God, and couldn't find one; and being unable to exist without, they perished. That struggle drove Nietzsche mad; it destroyed Dostoevsky; the end of Tolstoy is known to all, whilst as for Ibsen. . . .

ROSSER: Ibsen never went mad.

GILBERT: Ibsen was the most finished artist of the four, but I shouldn't have classed him with the other three. But if you look up your Harper's Magazine you will find what befell the repressed Scandinavian in his old age.

ROSSER: Like Canon Makepeace?

GILBERT: It was hushed up, and only came out in his last plays. Ibsen was repressed and smothered like your Mark Twain.

ROSSER: That picture of Mrs.



Clemens sitting on the verandah and striking out every phrase that might offend the neighbours is too piteous to have been invented.

*GILBERT*: It was his own affair, and it doesn't matter, does it, for he wasn't even fourth-rate. Indeed, you have never produced one of the first rank.

*ROSSER*: Indeed! Indeed!

*GILBERT*: Where is your candidate to sit with the Great Ones on Parnassus?

*ROSSER*: Well, you must give us time.

*GILBERT*: All the time you want! Though time isn't a factor. You have two admirable specimens in the second rank: one rooted, the other uprooted: Whitman and Melville.

*ROSSER*: Whitman's been blown on lately, but Moby Dick is a vast book.

*GILBERT*: Nobody admires or enjoys it more than I. It is a revelation of the struggles of——

*ROSSER*: Captain Ahab—the White Whale!

*GILBERT*: —of the tortured soul of Herman Melville. He was a God-Struggler and a tragic figure, which brings me again to Joyce. One learns from his books that he was trained by the Jesuits as a priest. Being hurled from home, he lost, at one stroke, his religion, his country, and his foothold in the universe.

*ROSSER*: Hurled, was he? Did he get into trouble?

*GILBERT*: My dear Rosser! What a question! What drives any artist from his community? Joyce drove forth Joyce, and his roots once severed, the wind carried him to . . . Trieste, I believe, for he dates Ulysses from there.

The wind has borne him hither and thither, and no man knows his direction. There is no harbour for the lost soul.

*ROSSER*: No rest for the wicked?

*GILBERT*: It is not a joke, but a tragedy. Having lost all that holds a man secure to the earth, James Joyce, whirled by the tempest, alighted on alien soil and produced his masterpiece. With incredible artistry, he laboured for seven years to exhibit a wonderful picture of—himself!

*ROSSER*: I thought you said of Dublin.

*GILBERT*: What is Dublin or London or Bly, but the observer? There are idealised, sentimental Dublins (and Blys), but as Joyce is a greater artist than the others, his Dublin overshadows them all.

*ROSSER*: Do you think, then, that a man must be uprooted and storm-tossed in order to become a great artist.

*GILBERT*: Certainly not. Though that, too, depends on the age. If we have no more Bachs in their nests, it is because of the passing of the nest. With the possible exception of Landor, you might say it has been true in England for over a century.

*ROSSER*: One might almost fancy you despised modern art!

*GILBERT*: Perhaps I do. . . and the artists. The members of a harmonious community need no Art, in the modern sense—but that topic will lead us too far. James Joyce is a great and tragic figure, and if you watch his future work you will see the unfolding of his inward tragedy. The disruptive artist displays *himself*. He dramatises his own struggle. He exhibits his own despair on his canvas.

ROSSER: Then we should pity them.

GILBERT: That would be idle. They are.

ROSSER: What would you do with them?

GILBERT: I've told you. As an individual I denounce them; acting with my neighbours I would treat them as we treat dangerous lunatics. Without malice but without sentimentality, I would render them harmless to the community.

ROSSER: Don't you send your homicidal maniacs to an institution?

GILBERT: Yes; and I am against that policy which ties up sane citizens to guard them. As they can never safely be allowed abroad, I would put them painlessly to death.

ROSSER: Now, Gilbert! You wouldn't put Shaw or Joyce to death!

GILBERT: Indeed, I would; and actively assist, if called upon. The two evils of our age are sentimentality and tolerance. We ought to kill more.

ROSSER: Perhaps these gentlemen will kill you first! You will appear extremely objectionable—and dangerous—to them.

GILBERT: Certainly! And I tell you Rosser, that unless we have again, in England, men who will die or be killed for their beliefs, we cannot be saved.

ROSSER: From what?

GILBERT: Decay: Disruption: Death!

ROSSER: My dear Gilbert; you're nothing but a fanatic!

GILBERT: I'm an intense reactionary. I'm actuated by a faith which drives me forward. I may be destroyed by those whom I feel are enemies to the community; for they are many and strong. But I shall always believe in Old England.

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Mr. Gilbert's dialogue appeared in England in "G. K.'s Weekly." The editor printed with it the following note:

We have no intention of being drawn into a discussion about the Australian artist whose paganism is being so much discussed in the papers; but we are glad to have a somewhat parallel problem considered in this issue by Mr. Bernard Gilbert; because Mr. Bernard Gilbert, over and above his claim as a pioneer of rural reconstruction, seems to be almost the only man we have come across anywhere, who is capable of discussing this point of art and morals and seeing that they are two different things. The ordinary argument is endless and useless; one man saying "This is immoral," the other replying hotly "It is not immoral; it is a masterpiece;" the first rejoining indignantly "You call that a masterpiece which degrades and defiles, etc., etc.," and so on for ever. This is exactly as if a man were to see the Vicar of his parish on the top of the church spire inspecting the weathercock, and were to shoot the reverend gentleman very neatly in a vital spot. A judge of shooting would say "That is a good shot;" somebody else would reply "How can you call that a good shot which deprives us of our dear Vicar? etc., etc." Of course it is a good shot, but not a good action. Where the artists get muddled is in not seeing that we act on the moral and not the artistic judgment. We say "Let us hang this marksman." Few but Mr. Bernard Gilbert have the moral courage to say "Let us burn this masterpiece."



# Three Poems

By MAUD USCHOLD

## La Golondrina

Flashed like light  
Your dazzling star-white ship,  
Over a turquoise sea,  
Its sails white skeins of song.  
You stood at the prow  
Like gale whipt flame,  
Your hair like billowing  
Sulphur smoke. Because  
Of your eyes I could not see  
The sun. Blindness....  
Then you were gone.

## Sundown Wind

Over water gleaming  
Like an idol's eye  
Hover purple fingers of night.  
Wind flies at the throat of ripples  
Beating the sullen reeds,  
Then crouches in the sumac,  
A shrill jezebel whimpering  
Over the broken jug of day.

## When Night Is A Silver Moth

When night is a silver moth  
Sucking silence from the earth,  
And fungous shadows spring  
In the spoor of clouds,  
I will hide my eyes in tears  
Lest my heart be burned  
By the breath of a moon  
That rimed the shields of Babylon;  
Be bound by her long white hair.

# The People On the Street

By MARIE LUHRS

The people on the street bear different shells:  
The fluted curves of youth, the cracks of age;  
The fool's smooth brow, the pucker of the sage;  
The fat of pleasures and the scars of hells;  
Dresses tinkling with invisible bells  
Or meshing dancing bodies in a cage;  
Perfume on women, sweat, the truckman's wage—  
The people on the street bear different smells.  
Beneath their husks the same animal meat . . .  
Beneath their creeds and rules and holy lore  
Their souls. The ash, the essence, and the core  
Of every soul embodied on the street  
Is the same lead measure, the same dead chant:  
*I am hungry; I am thirsty; I want.*

## The Circus

By EDWARD SAPIR

To greater heights the circus manager  
Has flown, but in the boundless east and west  
The elephants career and eagles whirl  
And north and south fly winds without arrest.  
It is the routine circus of the sky,  
Flapping a compass round in rain or shine;  
The four airy trapezes ask no why,  
Celestial beasts and birds perform in line.

It is the lower circus comes to grief,  
For here the clowns forget their simple part.  
They will be frenzying beyond belief,  
Tearing and clawing, clubbing heart on heart.  
Did they but hold to slapstick and guffaw,  
Then were the cosmic circus held to law.



# The Mole

By JOHN METCALFE

WITH an unspoken curse, Pietro Succi gave his head a downward peck-like jerk, twisted his shoulder round, and bit his upper arm. The fit of coughing which he stifled in his sleeve convulsed his frame, passed, then returned more violently. And each time that he coughed Pietro bit.

The paroxysm left him. With a cautious venom he spat out the earth which gritted in his mouth. He was panting from strenuous exertion and from his smothered rage against the cough which nearly had betrayed him.

The narrow tunnel at one end of which he crouched was twelve yards long, but Succi reckoned it in years. Two yards a year, that made six years. That was the time it took a man to burrow downwards through the earthen flooring of his cell, to drive a level passage underneath the prison wall, to start at last upon the upward trending slope that led towards freedom and the light of day.

Humped half asquat within the elbow of this gradual ascent; Succi could catch the glimmer from the lamp outside his cell. Towards this niggard radiance the shadowy vista of his burrow stretched in a dwindling ring, but closer, at a little further than his hand might reach, the upper portion of its circle was occluded by a straight black edge. That was the bottom of the prison wall he thought. He looked at it and frowned.

Somehow the thing dismayed and

baffled him. Hardly a board that stayed the tunnel's sides of which he should not know the form and feel by heart, hardly a scar upon the stubborn soil to which he might not give a proper story and a date, yet of the grave miscalculation which had brought him up against the lower courses of the wall instead of several feet beneath it he could remember nothing. For some moments he stared perplexedly, then with a sudden passionate intake of the breath he turned and feverishly recommenced his labouring.

The earth fell pattering round him in a chilly, softly crumbling shower, matted his hair, tickling inside his loosely fitting shirt, filling his eyes and nose, making him choke and grunt. It was now or never. The work that he should do tonight would, at an earlier stage, have taken him six months. Now, on the final lap, it was no longer necessary to carry back the earth laboriously to his cell, plaster it evenly upon the floor and cover it with straw. He had to do no more than pack it roughly downwards with his feet.

The tunnel took increasingly an upward trend. Behind him lay the boards which he had brought in order to revet the sides. They were the last the Governor had sent him, the remnants of a packing-case. After the first two years he had been allowed to occupy his time in fashioning as best he might from rude material such as this a host of worthless trifles,—brackets and little

cabinets, a table even and an ornamental stool. Of what became of them he was not curious to enquire. They were removed as soon as made, gravely, without comment but with the suggestion of a stern pity, by the sphinx-like warder who carried him the wood. Enough that they had served his turn, they and the chisel. As for the boards, he would hardly need them now. In half an hour or less the burrows should be vertical, and then...

With a tightening at his chest, a curious prickling and tingling of his skin, he braced his muscles for the ultimate assault, and, as his body strove and struggled, Pietro's mind, released, fled skimming backwards.

In a kind of vivid dream he saw himself as he had stood eight years ago, desolate for the first time within his cell, gazing with unseeing eyes upon the truckle bed, the freshly littered straw, listening in a dry anguish of despair to the fading echoes of his goaler's tread.

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For nearly two years after his conviction Pietro's brain lay frozen in a curious suspension of emotion. A dragging, two-months' trial for the murder of his brother had ended in a sentence of imprisonment for life, ironically commuted to a term of forty years. He had been stricken, stunned. Not till that day when, in reward for good behaviour, he had been set one afternoon to hoe a bed of garlic in the Governor's garden had his Idea been born...

Raising his eyes a moment from his work he had looked up and seen the sunlight glitter on a pane... He had

been long enough within the prison to realize that a little further to the rear beneath this pane was situated his own cell. In a flash it had come to him. He could be no more than twenty paces from the outer wall. Some day he would escape!

Reflection, while it brought to light unreckoned difficulties, had strengthened his resolve. A number of circumstances favoured the attempt. For one thing the wood and mallet and the precious chisel! Besides that, the prison was old and antiquated. His own cell had an earthen floor!

It was in the night that he had worked. The opening of the burrow had each morning to be covered with boards and then with straw. As his tunnel lengthened it became increasingly an arduous task to free his clothes and body of the soil that covered them. Finally he had feigned a liking for lying on the earth to cool himself. His warder, fortunately, was an unsuspecting giant from the plains of Lombardy.

Amongst his keepers he was held to be a man whose spirit had been broken by his troubles. He had overheard them once as they discussed him. Their words had made him chuckle. He broken! He who had wrought a tunnel with the sweat of brain and body, the ungrudging agony of years! He was above them all, the clods, the fat-cheeked, swine-fed dolts! He worked more gleefully that night for knowing how he had outwitted them.

Thus, with the steady lengthening of the tunnel, a secret and increasing pride had burned within the soul of its creator. Pride,—an another, an in-



tenser feeling of which the man himself was unaware.

Slowly, unconsciously, the focus of his powers had shifted. True he had made the tunnel, but truer that the tunnel had made him. Like a difficult and an ungrateful child it called unceasingly upon his time, his labor and his loving care. His life was dedicated to its service. He was become its creature and its slave.

Once there had been excitement in the prison. A man was pardoned. Fresh evidence had come to light and he was free. A miracle! There had been a glimpse of him as he passed unsteadily along a corridor, his face vacant, staring. He did not look happy. Liberty had merely dazed, bewildered him. Pietro felt no envy. Not thus to him should freedom come at length. Not as a gift. Pietro should command it!

And now at last the time had come. A few more moments and he would have left the tunnel. It would be no longer his. He felt a sudden chill along his spine, a shudder almost of dismay.

His tunnel! He had served it as an artist served his art, a priest his faith. For years on end he had assessed each day by nothing but the handfuls of brown earth he carried backwards to his cell. Those strenuous, troglodytic hours had done their work on him. He was become the slave of one idea, a scheming, resolute brain directing hands that clawed and tore, a man no longer, only a Creature that could Tunnel.

Suddenly he paused. His heart gave a wild beat. A clod, untouched, came tumbling of itself upon his feet. He put a hand upon the place from which

it fell. Just for a second the crumbling earth seemed to strike faintly warm upon his finger tips.

He struggled to collect himself, but as his hand had felt the earth his heart had given a sick drop. A sense of ominous impendence weighed him down.

In the close silence of the tunnel's end he waited, listening, and as he waited something crept and stirred minutely in his brain. He could hear the hammering of his heart,—it sounded like the beating of a drum. He could hear the drive and surge of blood against his ears, the tiny whispering of the damp and wounded earth about his head. And now, between these sounds,—a voice, a memory...

A threatening image rose before his eyes. He saw the bottom of the prison wall, its ruled and level edge, that wall that should not have been there. He saw himself as he had stood dismayed a moment gone, his hand upon the earth that had seemed warm. He saw at last a vacant, goggling face, the face of someone passing down a corridor, the tautly white and staring face of one whom liberty had terrified...

He turned and in a final frenzy tore wildly at the soil above his head. He had dropped the chisel and was working with his hands alone. A smother of earth fell blinding, choking, in his eyes and mouth. He realized that he was shouting, cursing, but his outcry did not cease.

Suddenly the earth above him stirred. It fell upon him in a murderous, crushing weight. As by degrees he fought his upward way he felt a burning heat. His eyes were blinded by a torturing light. Something was roaring, boom-

ing in his ears. Surely, the sound of voices.

And, why, it was broad day!

He sank exhausted, dazed, upon the ground. He rubbed his eyes and, blinking, looked about him. Where was the prison, where? Whose were those faces peering at him through a fence?

For a while he sat, bewildered and dismayed, then, as he heard a step behind and felt a touch upon his shoulder, his confusion ended. Of course, he could remember now, remember perfectly. This was his joke, the little joke he played so well. These were the people who had come to watch him and applaud.

The fire left his eyes. Upon his grimed and bleeding face there broke the flicker of a wistful smile. A pair of unseen hands assisted him to rise.

He shuffled slowly off, drooping upon that firm and friendly arm. He was weary, weary, and very hungry.

Presently he knew that they would give him supper.

His smile attained a preternatural tenderness.

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For a short time after he had vanished the little crowd that had collected to watch Pietro Succi's exit from his burrow stood chattering by the fence. It was rare fun to see that shouting,

frenzied thing with whirling, flail-like arms come thrashing upwards from the ground. Good fun, and nobody the worse for peeping, although his people did make such a fuss. It was worth ten lire any day to watch. Besides, it only happened about once a month.

Two peasant lads remained beside an opening in the fence.

"And now you see," said one, "That's how he always does it. Just like a badger, isn't he, or else an earth-bear from the forest? They only start the tunnel for him and he finishes. He thinks that he's escaping from the prison. Seven times I've seen it. The greatest sight in Veggia,—or anywhere in Sicily they say. Why, once there was a man who came to see him do it from Palermo."

"But why?" enquired the other, "Why does he want to tunnel? And was he really in a prison once?"

"Yes. He was eight years in the prison. They thought he murdered someone. He was just escaping from his tunnel when the pardon came. It made him mad. And now he always has to burrow."

For a while they hung, fascinated, staring upon the spot from which the madman had emerged. Then, with a final shuddering glance, they slowly turned away.



# The Lilacs

TO A.....AND H....., ROYAL AIR FORCE

*August 1925*

By WILLIAM FAULKNER

We sit drinking tea  
Beneath the lilacs on a summer afternoon,  
Comfortably, at our ease  
With fresh linen on our knees,  
And we sit, we three,  
In diffident contentedness  
Lest we let each other guess  
How happy we are  
Together here, watching the young moon  
Lying shyly on her back, and the first star.

There are women here:  
Smooth-shouldered creatures in sheer scarves, that pass  
And eye me strangely as they pass.  
One of them, my hostess, pauses near:  
....Are you quite all right, sir?... she stops to ask.  
....You are a bit lonely, I fear.  
Will you have more tea? cigarettes? no?...  
I thank her, waiting for them to go...  
To me they are as figures on a masque.  
...Who? ... shot down  
Last spring... poor chap, his mind...  
The doctors say... hoping rest will bring...  
Busy with their tea and cigarettes and books  
Their voices come to me like tangled rooks.  
We sit in silent amity.

...It was a morning in late May...  
A white woman, a white wanton near a brake,  
A rising whiteness mirrored in a lake;  
And I, old chap, was out before the day  
In my little pointed-eared machine,  
Stalking her through the shimmering reaches of the sky.  
I knew that I could catch her when I liked  
For no nymph ever ran as swiftly as she could.  
We mounted, up and up,  
And found her at the border of a wood,  
A cloud forest, and pausing at its brink

I felt her arms and her cool breath.  
 The bullet struck me here, I think,  
 In the left breast  
 And killed my little pointed-eared machine. I saw it fall,  
 The last wine in the cup. . . .  
 I thought that I could find her when I liked  
 But now I wonder if I found her, after all.

One should not die like this  
 On such a day,  
 From angry bullets, or other modern way.  
 Yet science is a dangerous mouth to kiss.  
 One should fall, I think, to some Etruscan dart  
 In meadows where the Oceanides  
 Flower the wanton grass with dancing  
 And, on such a day as this,  
 Become a tall wreathed column: I should like to be  
 An ilex on an isle in purple seas.  
 Instead, I had a bullet through my heart. . .

. . . . Yes, you are right:  
 One should not die like this,  
 And for no cause nor reason in the world.  
 Its well enough for one like you to talk  
 Of going in the far thin sky to stalk  
 The mouth of death, you did not know the bliss  
 Of home and children, the serene  
 Of living and of work and joy that was our heritage.  
 And, best of all, of age.  
 We were too young.  
 Still . . . he draws his hand across his eyes  
 . . . . Still, it could not be otherwise.

We had been  
 Raiding over Mannheim. You've seen  
 The place? Then you know  
 How one hangs just beneath the stars and sees  
 The quiet darkness burst and shatter against them,  
 And, rent by spears of light, rise in shuddering waves  
 Crested with restless futile flickerings.  
 The black earth drew us down, that night,  
 Out of the bullet-tortured air,



A great black bowl of fireflies.. . .  
There is an end to this, somewhere. . . .  
One should not die like this...

One should not die like this.  
His voice has dropped and the wind is mouthing his words  
While the lilacs nod their heads on slender stalks,  
Agreeing while he talks,  
Caring not if he is heard, or is not heard.  
One should not die like this. . . .  
Half audible, half silent words  
That hover like grey birds  
About our heads.  
We sit in silent amity.  
I am cold, for now the sun is gone  
And the air is cooler where we three  
Are sitting. The light has followed the sun  
And I no longer see  
The pale lilacs stirring against the lilac pale sky.

They bend their heads toward me as one head.  
...Old man... they say... How did you die?...

I — I am not dead.

I hear their voices as from a great distance... Not dead  
He's not dead, poor chap; he didn't die...

# The Pot of Bullion

## A DRAMATIC FANTASY

By JOHN McCLURE

*In the court of an ancient structure in Cairo are discovered, seated about a pot of gold, EUSEBIUS SCAURUS, DIODORUS CARNIFEX, PETRONIUS AMPHAX and METRODORUS ASTYANAX, who some time ago sold his soul to the devil for three hundred pieces of silver. METRODORUS has just returned from an errand, the nature of which is divulged.*

**METRODORUS.**—The only way I could tell he was in the room was a guzzling sound.

**EUSEBIUS.**—He was invisible then?

**METRODORUS.**—You could see through him like air. If he had not have been drinking beer, I should have missed him.

**PETRONIUS.**—Did you give him the inquiry?

**METRODORUS.**—I burned it in the candle-flame and he answered. There was bones and skulls in the corners. Cats was under the bed.

**DIODORUS.**—And how did the magician respond?

**METRODORUS.**—“Spend freely, and the devil take the hindmost.”

**PETRONIUS.**—Then he does not consider the money is tainted?

**METRODORUS.**—He said “Finders is keepers.”

**EUSEBIUS.**—If that is the case, we may as well divide the bullion.

**METRODORUS.**—You can forget about me.

**PETRONIUS.**—But you are entitled to twenty per cent.

**METRODORUS.**—Treasure troves is treacherous. I know of a rascal discovered a pot of silver and purchased a chariot. He run over the Khedive. I will not finger a chunk of it.

**PETRONIUS.**—Remember. You got your own gold from the devil.

**METRODORUS.**—I gave him a gentleman’s bargain.

*Enter PORPHYRY ARSANO*

**PORPHYRY.**—Did you consult the magician.

**METRODORUS.**—I could see through him like vapor. There was owls over the door.

**PORPHYRY.**—I am eager to learn what he said to you.

**METRODORUS.**—“Spend freely, and the devil take the hindmost.” There was cats under the bed.

**PORPHYRY.**—It is unfortunate he referred to the devil.

**PETRONIUS.**—He said finders are keepers. We can rely on him. Had the money been tainted, he would have said so.

**PORPHYRY.**—He mentioned the fiend.

**EUSEBIUS.**—Only by way of a proverb.

**METRODORUS.**—Proverbs is wiser than doctors. Divide the bullion into four parts if you wish to. I cannot bear to set eyes on it. You know very well I am mortgaged already.

**DIODORUS.**—He refers to the compact.



*PETRONIUS.*—One could do a great deal with this money.

*EUSEBIUS.*—My wants are modest.

*PETRONIUS.*—Eh?

*EUSEBIUS.*—You can divide it three ways if you care to. I shall live on my income.

*DIODORUS.*—It would be absurd for me to pretend to need money. You may each take fifty per cent.

*PORPHYRY.*—A philosopher who is unwilling to live upon crusts is scarcely worthy his name. I can make shift in one way or another. The pot is your property, Petronius Amphax.

*PETRONIUS.*—Bah! And you are the person who told me the devil was an abstraction.

*PORPHYRY.*—I asserted upon excellent grounds that the fiend is a metaphysical concept.

*PETRONIUS.*—Then take half of the money.

*PORPHYRY.*—I also assert that the phenomenal world is merely apparent and in that faith I will live and expire. But the pot is your property, Petronius Amphax.

*PETRONIUS.*—This is disgraceful. It is unpardonable for me to think of taking the total. There is nothing for it but to bury the pot under the stable again where we found it.

*EUSEBIUS.*—There is nothing to be afraid of. You can bury it in five minutes.

*PETRONIUS.*—Eh? We shall draw straws.

*DIODORUS.*—I would prefer not to figure in the transaction.

*EUSEBIUS.*—I will take no chance

in connection with this pot. I have formed my opinion.

*PETRONIUS.*—This sort of business should be conducted by a philosopher.

*PORPHYRY.*—I have renounced all claim to the bullion, I told you. It was your slave dug it up.

*EUSEBIUS.*—Metrodorus is already compromised.

*DIODORUS.*—He can do it with a modicum of danger.

*METRODORUS.*—I will not risk it. I saw his tail once.

*PORPHYRY.*—You are the logical person to handle it.

*METRODORUS.*—Because I am damned, is that any reason to challenge the devil?

*PETRONIUS.*—It is incumbent upon you to bury the pot, Metrodorus.

*METRODORUS.*—If you insist.

*PETRONIUS.*—We shall be grateful. The spade is under the manger.

*METRODORUS.*—If he appears....

*PORPHYRY.*—There is nothing to be afraid of. We will meet you without.

*PETRONIUS.*—There is nothing to be concerned about. But it would be better if we did not stay here.

*METRODORUS.*—I wish you would watch me.

*PORPHYRY ARSANO, PETRONIUS AMPHAX, DIODORUS CARNIFEX and EUSEBIUS SCAURUS depart with the lantern.. In the shadows METRODORUS ASTYANAX searches for the spade, humming to himself. He seems to be stuffing the gold into his pockets, but about this one cannot be sure, as the light is bad.*

# Poems of Preparation

By JOSEPH UPPER

## Finale

When the curtain comes down  
And does not go up again,  
It is a signal to the spectator  
That the play is over.

Why do you sit stupidly in your seat  
Blinking with foolish expectancy?

Get up!  
Get up and go out of the theater.  
Do you hesitate because it is dark out there?  
It will soon be dark in here, too.

## History

It is in the story books that we read:  
"And when the smoke of battle had cleared away. . . ."  
But you must remember:  
The vanquished did not see this.

## Silence

When I go into my house and shut the door,  
It is nobody's business what I do there.

When I was going to and fro in the street, my friends  
and neighbors said,  
"He tries our patience too much.  
There is no putting-up with him."

Let them knock at the door of my house now.  
I will send Someone in black to tell them,  
"He is not to be disturbed."



# The Growth of Tragedy

By JOSEPH T. SHIPLEY

A HISTORY of civilization, a philosophical survey of human enterprise, may grow naturally and fully from the contemplation of any phase of man's activity. Established by "Sartor Resartus," this fact has been brought to mind again by the broad sweep of Elie Faure's "History of Art," by the lightning luninece of Lewis Mumford's "Sticks and Stones," by the suggestive sophistry of C. Heard's "Narcissus." Strangely, the product of man's mind that suggests itself as the clearest and most direct expression of his spirit, therefore as the most illuminating field for the inquiry, has been subjected to no such analysis: no one has made a survey of literature as an interpretation of life throughout the ages. Perhaps the very intimacy of the relationship between literature and life has tangled the one inextricably in the complexities of the other, setting the task of separating and co-ordinating them beyond the power of any man. A bold few, with the aid of psychanalysis, have ventured to trace the secret of a writer through his works. Brandes has endeavored to follow a social surge through the literature of half a century. From the greater task all have recoiled; none feels competent. Yet surely the beginning of such a survey may be made; limiting himself to one of man's many literary moulds, a scholar and student of mankind may find that within it has been cast the full and changing spirit of humanity.

The possibility of comprehending a race's acts and aspirations through its literature may be made clearer by a glance at the growth of tragedy.

In Greek drama the sense of horror and pity is attained by the inevitable doom of the protagonist, driven by ancestral curse and inexorable fate to the expiation of a sin not of his willing. Borne through a series of plays beneath the weight of a moral destiny greater than the gods, adultery leads to the murder of a husband, revenged in matricide by plotting incestuous children. Each important figure has sinned, a sin so revolting that the tragic horror lies in its revelation, the pity in the helplessness of both the guilty and the avenger, under the "moira," the moral command of fate. Despite the soul-stirring nature of the deeds, this suffering of the Greeks is always caught into physical symbol, the punishment is always externalized. The chorus means and sways, Oedipus self-blinded staggers off, Clytemnestra is slain by her children, Orestes torn by the Furies.

In the tragedies of Shakespeare the ultimate disaster springs from the sin or the weakness of the protagonist. There is indecision or ill-decision; no sense of righteous enforcement of the moral laws of fate; but a feeble hesitancy until external forces in fierce contention drive the weakling on a fatal course; or a consciousness of sin, deliberate and defiant, trampling the moral code of the time. Both weakness

and sin meet ultimate retribution—usually so meted out as to adjust conditions for those who are to come. For the Elizabethan Englishman saw life clearing ahead for him; he brushed away old cobwebs, old hindrances. He could find no place in life for the weakling; beyond all things he placed the gallant knight obedient to the moral standards of loyalty to his country, Mistress of the Seas, and of love of his Virgin Queen. The plays of Shakespere, in all their essential melodrama—glimmering again in the France of Victor Hugo—rise to heights of rhetorical grandeur, sound emotional depths, attainable only in an age and a country the most glorious and promising an Elizabethan Englishman could conceive.

Something must be said, when the historian comes, of the spirit of the ages that have produced no tragedy.

By the time of Ibsen a shift in moral values has made itself manifest. The protagonists of his tragedies are well-meaning individuals, idealists—shallow, mistaken, self-deluding, perhaps, yet sincere. In the rapid growth that marked the industrial revolution, with the vast spreading of material lures, with the development of pragmatism and practical ethics and smug hypocrisy, the theories of the uncompromising idealists lead inevitably to disaster. The ruin that overcomes them is still, as with the sinners, caught into the gesture of finality: a slammed door, a maniac's cry, a shot; all external and definite expressions of the tragic growth. Yet in several respects Ibsen's dramas hark back to the Greek. The tragic conclusion, final as it may be in regard to the protagonist, does not as

in Shakespere promise release; the tragedy hangs heavy over those who remain. Nor is there any longer the struggle and the doubt as to the outcome that we find in the Elizabethan, where sin, though it lose, may yet fight valiantly to an end not wrought of the metal of the sinning. Here, the tragic close is inevitably bound with the early action; we watch the path it cleaves unto its end. However, while the slow movement of the implacable hand of fate is visible to us, the victim himself moves unwitting on; once more as in Greek drama, the moment of tragic depth is that in which the protagonist himself becomes conscious of the trap his actions have set for him. Oedipus Rex and Gregers Werle are equally horror-stricken at their handiwork.

Andreyev in "Anathema" presents the tragedy of a more speculative society, of which social and industrial injustice are ingrained assumptions, that seek for the meaning of existence. It is a self-questioning, self-torturing spirit, wondering what purpose lies behind life, behind the veils of religion, the shams of philosophy, the lures of wealth. It is the tragedy of the man that turns from the practical problem beneath his eyes and hands—which are blindfolded and bound by ignorance or fear—to beat his despair against the turrets of the world. The serpent coiled on the tree of knowledge in the form of an interrogation point; the Russians lived in the hell of eternal, futile questioning.

Drama today finds its tragedy in many themes. Germany is concerned chiefly with the inevitable defeat of man in his war on man's lust for

wealth and power, which leads to orgies of industrial destruction, to cataclysms of warring greed. Toller and Kaiser seek in these fields the horror and pity of their plays. In America tragedy is compressed into cold, hard, lonely lives; it hides close to the soil in sordid, tawdry homes; until suppression so dams the course of joy and love and full free life that they burst in sudden flood upon the land: these are the visions of Eugene O'Neill. Or, as in Lawson's "Processional," the tragedy is the overwhelming farce of American life: its "jazz babies" with quickly moving legs and slow minds; its quack reformers and frightened lying employers and sensation-mongering press; its sentimentality and complex on the inferiority complex, that leads it forth in masked bands or bands in opposition, but always bands—jazz bands of America: bunk! Through all of this gleams, perhaps the most tragic element of all, an indomitable faith that somehow good will blossom.

The most complete expression of the tragic spirit of today, however, lies in "Exiles," by James Joyce. Without either the universality of emotional appeal—it reaches the emotions by way of the intellect—or the rhetorical grandeur of the sublime melodramas of Shakespeare, "Exiles" is to us rich and full in tragic power as no play before. Its tragedy springs, in the first place, neither from weakness nor from sin, but from the goodness and strength of the protagonist. Richard Hand beats down with indomitable will the call of his emotions, at the dictates of his reason, for the highest good he knows. The characters of Ibsen's dramas are

well-meaning, but how shallow and paltry and self-deceived—not in the portrayal, but in the natures Ibsen knows, to portray—beside the strong and sensitive author Joyce presents, who understands the weaknesses of humankind, knows his own frailty, yet determines to hold himself to the high course he has charted. If Richard Hand be too good for the world, it is neither as the blind impractical theorist of Ibsen, nor as the scornful "unco' guid" of Robert Burns, but as a man who sees the heights humanity may attain and tears himself asunder that at least one part of him may breathe the upper air—where all who can, who dare, venture are welcome and free to join him.

The play, as it grows, gathers in power from the fact that the impending tragedy is foreseen, not only by the spectators, but by the victim—foreseen and avoidable. A nod, the slightest bending of his iron will, and Richard wins peace and security. For he believes that each soul must seek without dictation from another, the experiences that are to be its life, its self; each spirit must make its own decisions. His wife pleads with him to command her, to bid her to be faithful; at his word all will be well; he is faithful to freedom and leaves her to her test. The tragedy, then, is by the victim foreseen and avoidable; yet it is inevitably rooted in his nature. For the weakness of succumbing, of winning security by enslaving another soul, is too horrible to endure; Richard will not yield to it. He conquers—and in the act does violence to his soul; his mind tells him that he has acted



well; his heart, his whole being, cries out in love and jealousy and torturing doubt.

The tragedy ends, moreover, with no final settlement nor promise of repose; there is no external, symbolic act. Life continues outwardly almost as before, but the lengthening years will prolong

the horror of that conflict, of the eternal doubt that will never be resolved. In the intensity of this drama, Joyce summons all the feeling tragedy has been made to bear, and gathers together what the historian may trace in many aspects through the ages, to the fulness and complexity of today.

## Never Dream Love Your Own

By JAMES FEIBLEMAN

On beds of feathery down,  
Twisting asleep or awake,  
Ladies, never dream love your own  
Among what dreams you make.

Those reveries would soon clothe it  
In sheen aglimmering strange,  
And you would come to loath it  
Whereas all fashions change.

O rather be your love first tried  
When realistically fresh,  
So that you do not turn aside  
From all delicious flesh.

# Reviews

## THOSE BARREN LEAVES

(*Those Barren Leaves*, by Aldous Huxley, Doran, 1925.)

**T**HOSE *Barren Leaves* is written by a highly cultivated, erudite man. It is, therefore, condemned to be relegated to the limbo of the merely amusing or artificial. Mr. Huxley is perfectly articulate, consequently he is considered meretricious by the present day American school who believes that stammering in words of one syllable is the only style capable of bearing the freight of a great theme.

"*Those Barren Leaves*" is not so blithe as "*Crome Yellow*" nor so fantastic as "*Antic Hay*." It is indeed a sort of modernist tract with diversions. At a house party given by Mrs. Aldwinkle, an English lady of a certain age, possessed of an amorous disposition and lion hunting proclivities, are gathered several men and women among whom is Calamy, a young man who seems thrown by destiny from one woman's arms to another; but who is unable to find quite aside from the morality of the case, any ultimate good or satisfaction in these affairs. He represents the mystic in the guise of Don Juan. Contrasted is Tom Cardan, a wastrel who has grown old living off the richer members of this elegant leisuredom. He is Mr. Worldly Wiseman, the cynic Epicurean. The women of the party and the other men are farce characters, a background for these two men. Into this gathering is

tossed a third protagonist, Francis Chellifer, a journalist and pet. He cannot conceive life in vacuo as Calamy can, nor be cynical of the great seething mass of life outside of the little circle of idlers as Cardan can do. He is not a reformer but a humanist.

The book ends with no facile solution. All three men remain baffled. Old age and the imminence of death give the lie to Cardan's philosophy. He can eat and drink, but he cannot be merry today because of the knowledge that tomorrow he is to die. Calamy becomes involved in an affair with a lady novelist, one of Mrs. Aldwinkle's guests; but his heart is not in dalliance. He goes up on the mountain to invoke his soul and to indulge in "omphaloscopsis" as Cardan calls it, after the approved manner of greater mystics. Thus ends the book on a suspended cadence; Chellifer continues the even tenor of life, remaining the tolerant observer, certain of nothing, demanding nothing.

It is interesting to note that Huxley takes no sides. He is merely the exhibitor. The reader is at a loss when he turns the last page to know what philosophy he is called on to follow. No doubt the moral of the book is that there are twelve thousand roads to salvation. But Huxley seems reluctant to recommend any of them.

That Aldous Huxley is not a great writer, I am prepared to admit. He lacks imagination and cannot make

fantastic invention serve. His characters for all his clever exposition fail to come alive. He is not an intuitive creator, his mind having too intellectual a caste. "Those Barren Leaves" remains, however, civilized reading.

JULIUS W. FRIEND

## POETS OF AMERICA

(*Poets of America*, by Clement Wood, Dutton, 1925.)

**M**R. CLEMENT WOOD (a better poet than Milton, according to Upton Sinclair) has just completed his appraisal of American poetry. Mr. Wood's critical calibre is shown in his remarks on T. S. Eliot, whose poetry he says is "brainless," "no more than any bedlam raving." After such statements about the author of "The Sacred Wood" in which he sneers even at these lines from "The Waste Land"

April is the cruellest month, breeding  
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing  
Memory and desire, stirring  
Dull roots with spring rain

the author of "Poets of America" proceeds elsewhere to quote as examples of excellent poetry, this from Louis Untermeyer

God, you don't know what it is—  
You in your well-lighted sky,  
Watching the meteors whizz  
Warm, with the sun always by.

and this from Gamaliel Bradford:

If praying to the saints could comfort  
Bribing with candle or with vow,  
They might ensconce my soul in some fort  
More sure and safe than I know now.

Of course, the truth of the matter is that Mr. Wood has almost no ear for

poetry. (For instance, he says of the following line by Mr. Eliot

Good night, ladies, good night, sweet ladies,  
good night, good night

"the last two words might be rendered as good American slang, thereby improving the music!" No ear, no ear at all.)

Mr. Wood's book contains savage remarks on T. S. Eliot, H. D., Ezra Pound, John Gould Fletcher, Conrad Aiken, E. E. Cummings, Alfred Kreymborg, Max Bodenheimer, Marianne Moore, Wallace Stevens and other "moderns"—all of whom he discusses in one chapter, dismissing their work as "bedlam raving"—and words of gentle praise for Elias Lieberman, Oliver Herford, Corinne Roosevelt Robinson, and Berton Braley. What can be the matter with the man? What cancer is eating him? Mr. Wood, from some strange deficiency in his character, will in the same breath praise a hack like Berton Braley for a few fair lines of ordinary verse and attack with berserk fury men like Eliot and Bodenheimer because they have written some unsuccessful stuff. You will never learn from Mr. Wood who speaks so kindly of Berton Braley, that Wallace Stevens has written a few lines of good verse, too. Mr. Stevens shows "flashes of poetic ability." If Mr. Wood can say a kind word for one man's good stuff—Braley's, if any—why can't he say a good word for another's—Eliot's and Bodenheimer's and Kreymborg's (they have written a little decent stuff, you know, just like Mr. Braley). In their work, Mr. Wood carefully emphasizes what he thinks is bad, depreciating the good. His chapter entitled



"The Waste Land" is in a critical sense, fundamentally foolish, and, in a personal sense, profoundly dishonest. He knows as well as you and I that these poets he attacks so savagely have done some good work within his own comprehension as worthy of praise as the work of Untermeyer and Bradford which he does praise. But he slurs over it.

There are, of course, many excellent things among the quotations in Mr. Wood's collection. Careening about in American poetry like a pig at an Irish fair, he was bound to run into something good now and then.

Mr. Wood, however, has little interest in the art of poetry. He judges it as a personal experience, discussing it from the viewpoint of his own gospel, his own intellectual processes and his own emotions. His approach to poetry is as crude as an ignorant man's approach to pictorial art (if he is a Democrat, an apt Democratic cartoon is a great drawing; if he is a kluxer, a chromo of home and mother is finer than Botticelli). Mr. Wood does not see poetry objectively at all. If the subject matter gives him an emotional thrill, if it satisfies his ideal of the true and the beautiful, if it accords with his own gospel, it is good poetry. The verse may be mediocre or wretched—it is all the same to Mr. Wood. If it doesn't appeal (in its subject matter) to Mr. Wood personally, it not only isn't good—it isn't poetry. You can get a rise out of him any day with doggerel on liberty, equality, and fraternity, or a lampoon on the rich. It is the habit of low intelligences to recoil with savage hostility from all that they do not

understand, or that violates their tribal taboos. Mr. Wood recoils handsomely.

I am talking of Mr. Wood's appraisal of his contemporaries. He acquits himself conventionally on established work of the past. The canons were laid down before he was born, and he can't go wrong. So he refers wisely to "the divine Crashaw," to Campion and his fellow Elizabethans, and goes into the conventional ecstasies over Tom o' Bedlam. The dead, it is to be observed, are all right. Mr. Wood will allow the Elizabethans to say "jug jug jug tereu" as much as they please, but he can't abide the thought of Mr. Eliot doing so, and he really grows savage about it.

Mr. Wood is a sentimental romanticist with a messiah infection. He confuses all life and all experience with his art (he writes poetry, too, as was remarked at the beginning of this review, and some of it is by no means bad) and indulges in the conventional blah-blah. "Poetry," he says, "is the interpreter of the past, mirror of the present, parent and midwife of the future." That is a good period, sounds magnificent, is quite true, and signifies little. Prose literature and spoken philosophy are also, in the same sense, all these things. Mr. Wood, with the customary grandiloquence of sentimental poets, appropriates to one of the fine arts the entire scope of human and cosmic activity, hogging it all for the bards, and leaving no work at all for the painters, sculptors, musicians, inventors, soldiers, seers, statesmen, laborers, scientists, philosophers, messiahs and heroes who have helped things along to this writing and who,



we have reason to believe, will be present at the childbed of the future too.

Mr. Wood, the foe of capitalism, begs the business men to pay the poets a pension. "Shall we say," he cries, "that a man must pay for electing the unfading laurel by living in want and dying in poverty?" "Unfading laurel," coming from an arch enemy of asphodel verse, reminds me of this other horticultural gem on page 21—"that beauty-loving flower of man's body that we call the soul."

To return from this flower garden to the poetry discussed by Mr. Wood, it is to be stated to his credit that he devotes considerable space to Adah Isaacs Menken (whose verse is hardly worth it, but whose personality is) and to Rose O'Neill and John Hall Wheelock, both too much neglected. It is also to his credit that he selected American Indian poetry and negro poetry for discussion, but the discussion, extremely superficial, is not so creditable as the intention. He devotes chapters to Poe, Whitman, Lanier, Dickinson, Robinson, Frost, Masters, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Amy Lowell, Carl Sandburg and Elinor Wylie. He takes up in briefer space a couple of hundred poets, including, as remarked above, Mr. Braley. He praises—often in over-enthusiastic terms—much good stuff. He praises as enthusiastically much that is bad. This, I believe, Mr. Wood realizes, as he says with due humility in an exhortation on page 378, "We need a more capable criticism, men and women of the pen and the typewriter."

JOHN MCCLURE

## "TROUBADOUR"

(*Troubadour, An Autobiography, by Alfred Kreymborg, Boni and Liveright, 1925.*)

A MYRIAD of forms wander, continually, on and off the stage that is the novel "Troubadour." One figure, however, stands in the center of that stage all the time, through the storms and stresses, triumphs and despairs, love and living, of the plot, one unobtrusive figure, the delicate recorder of the endless waking dream that has been his lot in life, the man himself, "Ollie," "Krimmie," or Alfred Kreymborg.

"Troubadour" is a novel if ever there was a novel. It is called an autobiography and doubtless is that, too, the autobiography of a man whose life has been a novel, not of the sordid, matter-of-fact kind, but a romantic novel illumined by the soft light of an unusually sensitive, unusually honest, unusually true personality. Anybody who has so thoroughly been himself all his life as the author of "Troubadour" can write a fascinating novel like "Troubadour," not the same novel, to be sure, but a novel as great as "Troubadour." But self-realization is a rare gift and though many of us attain a certain degree of self-realization at some stage or other in life, after we have waded through the slough of early insincerity or maladjustment, few of us can say that we were our true selves during that part of life all-important to the fostering of creative genius, childhood and adolescence.

Contrary to popular belief it takes as much courage, at least, to be a true and consistent dreamer as it does to be



a hero of the fiery, sword-clanking "action" variety. It is given to but few to be dreamers, the number of barren idlers and would-be dreamers notwithstanding. Anybody, however, who has followed the romance of the Troubadour through the four hundred and some odd pages of the autobiography, and especially through the part describing "the hungry years," will know what a true dreamer is...

Mr. Kreymborg, who started his literary career with prose, seems to have found himself again in prose in "Troubadour." Although not familiar with all of his poetry this reviewer, who has tried hard to follow the modernists in poetry in their tentative flights through new firmaments, is of the opinion that Mr. Kreymborg's proper medium of expression is prose, that intimate, impressionistic — "ragged, tattered and jagged," one might almost say,—prose of "Troubadour." It is the medium in which Mr. Kreymborg can be completely himself, as it does not tempt him toward the often artificial and forced seeking after odd effects and mad notes (however sincere the quest may be) of poetic eubism—or, if the term may be permitted—poetic "dysmorphism."

I shall not attempt to evaluate "Troubadour" as a record of contemporary artistic life in America. There can be no question, however, that the book stands as one of the most precious and phenomenal records existing of the groping and achievement of American art of the present era.

But through it all stands out clearly and unconsciously sympathetically that central figure of the Troubadour, play-

ing and being played on, but ever able to walk off to a corner and view himself and the situation understandingly and smilingly through the eyes of wisdom.

VAUGHN MEISLING

## MAMMONART

(*Mammonart*, by Upton Sinclair, Published by the author, Pasadena, Calif.)

"MAMMONART" is at once screamingly funny, tiresome and pathetic. It is always hopeless to look for a logical purpose or trend behind history, even the history of literature. Mr. Sinclair tries to show that the purpose of all literature is to sustain and flatter the ruling class; and that the writer has always been a sycophant to that class. He falls into some ludicrous conclusions. Yet suppose we admit the validity of Mr. Sinclair's suppositions, he has not said, yet, anything of art. The test of art is beyond the understanding of a man who can write a thick book indignantly denouncing writers who do not become shrill over the virtues of labor and the villainies of capital.

J. W. F.

## WHAT OF IT?

(*What Of It*, by Ring Lardner, Harper & Bros. 1925.)

THIS book is a nolle prosequi for those who would railroad the author into a safe niche in the hall of fame. It is a collection of sketches mainly published in periodicals and of syndicated stuff. They are feeble in wit, invention and artistry. The Lardner we had fondly created out of our



imagination, namely the ironist and satirist of American life and character, only peers occasionally from behind a few phrases. Ring Lardner, the artist, like large number of others heralded as great by our jazz critics, is still only a remote promise. Let me also state that the much trumpeted nonsense plays struck this reviewer as sad evidence.

J. W. F.

## OBSERVATIONS

(*Observations*, by Marian Moore. *The Dial Press* 1925.)

IF Miss Marianne Moore is not grateful to Mr. T. S. Eliot, or whoever it was first efficiently acclaimed her, and to the *Dial* for having awarded her its prize for 1914, she is an ungrateful woman. For her "Observations," unaided, would with difficulty, if at all, have found a publisher. This is not to disparage Miss Moore's poetry or the financial acumen of the publishers; but the contrary. Despite its canonization by the *Dial*, it is unlikely that Miss Moore's poetry will ever be popular. It is too cool, too cerebral, too objective. For anything it can do Miss Edna St. Vincent Millay will remain the favorite poet of our college girls and boys, Carl Sandburg of our radicals. That a book of poems by a woman should contain not a single "love-poem" or poem of motherhood is in itself singular. Miss Moore is an original. Her book is an expression of that originality. And in proportion to its originality, the progress of a work of art with critics and public is apt to be slow.

How describe the taste of an apple to one who has never tasted an apple?

Negatively, by saying wherein it is different from the taste of an orange; positively, by saying wherein it is like the taste of a pear. But these methods are, at best, approximate, unsatisfactory. The better way, when possible, is to present one's interlocutor with an actual apple, or with a slice of it. The taste of an apple cannot be described; it must be experienced: so with a work of art.

The savor of Miss Moore's work is spread throughout her book. One finds it concentrated in certain passages:

"I remember a swan under the willows in Oxford

with flamingo colored, maple—  
leaflike feet. It reconnoitered like a battleship. Disbelief and conscious fastidiousness were the

staple  
ingredients in its  
disinclination to move . . ."

"I recall their magnificence, now not more  
magnificent than it is dim. . . ."

"Wade  
through black jade  
Of the crow-blue mussel shells, one  
keeps  
Adjusting the ash heaps;  
opening and shutting itself like

an  
injured fan."

steam yacht, lying  
like a new made arrow on the  
stream . . ."

"and the fractional magnificence of Florentine  
goldwork—"

"It is a far cry from 'queen full of jewels'  
and the beau with the muff,  
from the gilt coach shaped like a perfume  
bottle,  
to the conjunction of the Monongahela and  
the Allegheny,"

And in this from a poem about a pet  
cat—

"Springing about with  
frolike ac-  
curacy."

Miss Moore is a poet's poet.

LOUIS GILMORE.